

FREMONT, THE CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE.

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

HON. HAMILTON FISH,

U. S. SENATOR FROM NEW YORK,

AND

HON. JAMES A. HAMILTON,

SON OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

LETTER OF HON. HAMILTON FISH.

NEWPORT, September 12, 1856.

James A. Hamilton, Esq., Nevis, Dobbs' Ferry, N. Y.:

MY DEAR SIR:—Your letter of the 30th ult. was sent to Washington, some days after I had left there, and was returned to New York, and followed me thence to this place. It was not received until many days after its date. You desire an expression of my views on the present condition of political affairs.

I have felt much embarrassment in determining the course which duty requires in the present political contest.

I am a Whig. I desire no additional epithet; neither National, nor Union, nor Conservative, nor Free Soil. The term Whig implies nationality, and devotion to the Union, and to the great principles of human liberty and of conservative stability. Whig principles are enduring, not dependent upon temporary issues or questions of political policy; but they are the principles of law and order, of the rights of person and property, of personal liberty and of social restraint, without which our republican institutions must cease to exist. I am reluctant to abandon a name which embodies such principles,

and which is endeared by the recollection of so many trying conflicts, through which it has been borne by illustrious statesmen whose names are embalmed in the history of the country.

But our old, honored Whig party is temporarily disorganized, and presents no distinctive candidates for our support. We must either abstain from voting, or make selection from among the candidates presented by other organizations, to neither of which may we be able to yield entire, cordial concurrence. To abstain from voting, or, (what is equivalent) to vote for persons not generally recognized as candidates, is an abandonment of a high duty. The elective franchise, which many are apt to consider only the privilege of the citizen, is a trust, from the considerate discharge of which he cannot relieve himself without a violation of duty to his principles and his country.

It rarely happens that an individual citizen finds in the persons presented, even by the party to which he belongs, precisely the candidates whom he would have preferred; at best, he has to yield something of his individual preferences to the wishes and preferences of others, and he who refuses to coöperate with any political party, because he does not find in any creed all the principles he approves, or because he cannot approve all that it avows, or because he mistrusts some of the men belonging to the party, and even some who seem to enjoy its confidence, is awaiting the realization of a political Utopia, whose attainment will not be reached within his days of usefulness. In the best aspect of the present contest, Whigs have to yield very much of their preferences. Thus, we find those who have been Whigs ranging themselves, if not permanently, at least for the coming contest, with either the Democratic, the American, or the Republican parties. Between these we have to make choice. The two former present for the principal office, candidates of tried experience and statesmanship. The third presents a candidate of less experience, but not untried or unknown. I am free to concede to each, patriotism, purity, and intelligence.

For more than the third of a century, Mr. Buchanan has occupied a space in the political history of the country; his political sympathies varying with the current of popular opinion. At one time a warm Federalist, and then a zealous Democrat — friend, and then opponent, of a National Bank — a supporter of the high protective policy in Pennsylvania, and a member of the Free Trade Cabinet,

which aimed to overthrow that policy — an approver of the Missouri Compromise line, and the advocate of its extension, and now approving its obliteration — first disapproving, and then applauding, the abrogation of the limitation of slavery extension.

But (as Mr. Buchanan is reported to have said,) it is not he, but “a platform,” which the Democratic party presents; and *that* the Cincinnati platform — a platform which assigns to the Constitution of the United States no higher duty than that of carrying Slavery wherever its jurisdiction extends, and which announces a foreign policy worthy of the Ishmaelite whose hand is against every man, and which can be practised only by a nation of pirates and of bandits. The civilized world was startled by the principles promulgated at Ostend, but those principles were adopted, in all their atrocity, at Cincinnati, and the Democratic party seeks to invest them with Executive power, and the aid of conservative Whigs is asked, in behalf of the chief author of those terrible heresies.

How they who value the public peace, who believe in the reality of national integrity, or who regard good faith as anything better than a mask behind which aggression and violence may conceal their designs, can support the foreign policy embodied in the Cincinnati platform, or can aid in giving practical efficiency to that policy, is a mystery only to be accounted for by the subtle but paramount influence of the concessions made in the other portions of the Democratic platform to the sectional interest, which in a part of the country has overridden all political distinctions of Whig and Democrat, and has converted what once was the *National Democratic* party into a mere *sectional Southern party*.

A party is not *national* merely because interest or ambition may lead some in the proscribed portion of the country to its support. Neither is it *sectional* because fear or prejudice may deter any or all in one section from its advocacy.

More than a year ago, a distinguished Southern gentleman who had earned the position which he graces in the Senate of the United States by ability and devotion to the Whig party, surpassed only by the zeal which he now gives to the support of Buchanan and the Democratic cause, in a carefully prepared letter to some of his constituents, after predicting “the fast-approaching time when, not only Louisiana, but the entire South” should be “animated by a single spirit,” justly characterized the party with which he now acts, by

saying, that "When that day shall come * * * I shall not, I trust, be found the last of those who will battle in behalf of the great *Southern party*."

The author of this letter is too intelligent to be deceived in the character or the designs of the party to which he has transferred his services. It is called "Democratic," but it is "the great *Southern party*."

Not only individuals, but the press at the South urge the Democratic party as the "*party of the South*," and present Mr. Buchanan as pre-eminently entitled to "the confidence and affections of the South." As far North as the city of Washington, the organ of the present administration, after presenting a series of reasons claiming Southern support for Mr. Buchanan, adds "this rapid retrospect discloses a consistency and an efficiency of *service to the South* which flattery can claim for no other living man." It is not for a consistency of service to his *country*—it is not for "knowing no North and no South," but "for service to the South," that in this same article Mr. Buchanan is presented "as in advance of any and every statesman of the North."

A letter recently published, written by a most intelligent, frank, and honorable gentleman, who was a delegate to the Cincinnati Convention from the State of Mississippi, and a member of the committee to announce his nomination to Mr. Buchanan, says that he (Mr. Buchanan) "stood upon the Cincinnati platform, and endorsed every part of it. He was explicit in his remarks on the slavery features, saying that the slavery issue was the absorbing element in the canvass"—"that he spoke in terms of decided commendation of the Kansas bill;" and that afterwards he said, "If I can be instrumental in settling the slavery question *upon the terms I have named*, and then add Cuba to the Union, I shall, if President, be willing to give up the ghost, and let Breckinridge take the government."

Slavery extension and filibustering are then the great objects of Mr. Buchanan's desire to be elevated to the Presidency—these attained, he will be willing to "give up the ghost." Governor Brown allows no doubt to rest upon Mr. Buchanan's policy on the slavery question, when in this same letter he adds, "In my judgment he is as worthy of *Southern* confidence and *Southern* votes, as Mr. Calhoun ever was."

But while similar evidences of the purely sectional character of the appeal made in his behalf and of the sectional policy of Mr. Buchanan and the Democratic party might be almost indefinitely multiplied, Mr. Buchanan himself furnishes evidence of the direction in which his thoughts, his affections, and his confidence lie. In a recent reply to an announcement of the pacification, lately proclaimed, between the two factions of the "Democratic party" in our State, Mr. Buchanan in ecstasy replies, "The whole Southern country will hail this reunion as a rainbow in the clouds." Even in this moment of rejoicing he could not include the North as a part of the country with which he sympathized — he had no *national* comprehensiveness to embrace, even in such a moment, his *entire* country — but to him the "*Southern country*" was his whole country — the North had no place in his thoughts. It was a *sectional*, not a national emotion, which broke forth on this occasion. From the fulness of the heart the mouth spake.

The Democratic party of the present day is, in my judgment, purely, narrowly sectional in its principles, its objects, and its candidates. It presents no single issue upon which the Whig party stood. Its success would invest with power the sectional domestic, and the aggressive foreign policy of the Cincinnati platform; — it would endorse the action and perpetuate power in the hands of a party which has wantonly sacrificed the internal peace of the country; has involved the nation in the most fearful sectional strife, and has jeopardized foreign war in the effort on the part of those in office to obtain (in their own persons,) a continuance of the means of evil — a party which has brought discredit upon the country by selecting as its representatives abroad, many either of known violence and extravagance, or of unknown mediocrity; and which, in catering for foreign votes, by its selection of exotic agents, has stimulated a counter-spirit of proscription and intolerance adverse to the genius of our Constitution and the stability of our institutions.

As a Whig, national and conservative in all my feelings and all my tendencies, I can find no resting-place within the embrace of this Democratic party.

The American party presents a most estimable citizen in the person of its principal candidate. For Mr. Fillmore I personally entertain a high respect, both as an individual, and as a statesman, and the general policy of his administration, particularly in the firm,

dignified, and pacific management of our foreign relations, may be claimed with satisfaction and approval as the result of a Whig triumph.

If he were now the representative of the Whig party and of Whig principles, we might even under the conviction of impending defeat, assert our principles, by casting away votes for the candidate of our party. But he repudiates the Whig party, its organization, and its principles. While this gallant party, distracted as it was, was struggling to regain a position, and to recover its organization, Mr. Fillmore, in his letter accepting the nomination of the American party, places reliance upon the "patriotic purposes," the "moderation and forbearance" of *that* party "*alone* of all the political agencies now existing." It alone, in his judgment, is equal to the demands of the occasion. It alone has his confidence.

In a more recent letter he frankly reminds some persons who tendered him their support, that he is "the candidate of the American party," and intimates that it would be "dishonorable" in him to receive their votes unless they "know his position." This frankness is equally commendable and significant — it is a caution that it will not be in favor of a Whig, that the votes for Millard Fillmore will be cast.

What concessions of principle have been made to bring Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Donelson on the same political platform — or which of these former antagonists has gone the farthest from his original position to strike hands in this new political brotherhood, it might be difficult to determine. The principles and the objects of the American party are (to the uninitiated) involved in doubt and uncertainty. Numerous platforms and creeds have been proclaimed, enunciating much that is good, and wise, and true, with much that is narrow, bigoted, proscriptive, and intolerant. What is its present precise doctrine or creed, I do not understand. I do not understand it to be admitted, even at this day, that secrecy, oaths, tests, and passwords, have been wholly abrogated — nor that the obligation has been removed which requires members not only in the exercise of the elective franchise, but in the distribution of official patronage in discharge of a public office, to confine themselves to members of the organization: nor that the religious test, which proscribed those of a certain belief, has been wholly rescinded.

We do know, however, that Mr. Fillmore, who is represented to

have been initiated in all the mysteries of the Order, and to have assumed the oaths of the several degrees, regards this new party as so distinct from, and at such variance with the Whig party to which he, and you, and I belonged, that he has withdrawn from the latter his confidence, and proclaimed to the world that he has transferred it wholly to the new party which boasts that it arose upon the downfall of the Whig party, and proclaims that the corruptions of both the Whig and the Democratic parties furnished the necessity for its existence.

On the score of party allegiance, then, or party attachment, Mr. Fillmore, in his present position, has no stronger claims upon us Whigs than has Mr. Buchanan, or Mr. Fremont; perhaps not as much claim, for they never abandoned us.

And we must not forget that the principles and the policy and the illustrious men of the party to which Mr. Fillmore formerly belonged — a party which claimed Clay and Webster as their leaders and exponents — had no more bitter opponent and reviler than Major Donelson, who now stands with Mr. Fillmore on the American ticket, as a candidate for the Vice-Presidency.

Experience sadly teaches us Whigs the necessity of looking to the soundness, the fidelity, and the attachment to our principles of the candidate for the second office, and if the recollections and the associations of the past furnish any inducements to support Mr. Fillmore, they present equally strong reasons for voting against Mr. Donelson. The two are inseparably associated, the dead carcass is bound to the living man — we cannot enjoy the one without being cursed with the other. I have endeavored in vain to see in the coming contest another possibility than the election of either the Democratic or the Republican candidate.

From the best information at my command, I cannot name a single State, North, South, East or West, which I believe will cast its vote for Mr. Fillmore. But supposing that he receive a few votes (and his intelligent supporters cannot expect to give him more than a few,) and that the election be thus thrown into the House of Representatives. This is an event at all times to be deprecated; at present it would especially threaten a rude shock to our system, not to be averted or compensated even by the election resulting in Mr. Fillmore's favor, if that were possible. But to anticipate that possibility would be to attribute to the representatives a degree of inde-

pendence of their constituents, which, I apprehend, will not be seen in our day. It would be ascribing to the Democratic party an amount of self-sacrifice and of patriotism, exceeding any ever exhibited by them, to expect that they would conduce to the election of Mr. Fillmore, when, by preventing any election by the House of Representatives (in case of their own inability to form combinations, which will enure to Mr. Buchanan's election,) they hope still to have the power and the patronage of the Government in their own hands (in the person of Mr. Breckinridge,) who, in the event of a failure to make choice in the Electoral College, will be chosen Vice-President by the present Senate, and may become acting President in case the House of Representatives fail to make an election.

The fierceness and bitterness of the assaults made by the organs of the American party, and by the peculiar friends of Mr. Fillmore upon Col. Fremont and the Republican party, seem to preclude the idea of any expectation of support of Mr. Fillmore from the representatives of that party in case the election be thrown into the House.

But it is to be hoped that there is no probability of its reaching there.

The party which supports Col. Fremont is said to be "sectional;" — if a charge were to be proved by its repetition, this would be fully established.

I find, however, nothing sectional in the call of the Convention by which he was nominated. If any portion of the Union was unrepresented in that Convention, it was from its own free choice, and not because it was excluded by the terms in which the Convention was called. The South disclaims the responsibility of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and unless that repeal was a sectional measure, the invitation to the Convention which nominated Col. Fremont was comprehensive and as broad as the Union. The resolutions adopted by the Convention are largely in the very language of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution. They make no assault upon the rights of any section, or upon the people of any section; they embody many of the principles for which the Whig party ever contended, while they contain no assertion of general principles for which the Whig party did not contend, or against which National Whigs, North or South, would object; they invade no rights of property of any kind; they do not assail the

rights of the States to establish and regulate their domestic institutions ; they do not propose to interfere with the migration or transfer of slaves from State to State, or with slavery in the District of Columbia ; they contemplate no obstruction to the rendition of the fugitive slaves, and no interference with the fugitive slave law ; they make no objection to the future admission of Slave States ; they raise no question of the permanence of Slavery within the States, and do not tend to the agitation of any question affecting the Institution of Slavery within the States. In all these points they contain not a word to which the extremest Southern man would object.

Wherein, then, are they sectional ? The charge must rest exclusively upon their resistance to the extension of Slavery into the Territories. This is no new doctrine. Some years since it was the universally received doctrine ; and only a few years back the whole North was unanimous on the question. The language of the resolutions on this point is not extreme. I do not adopt their whole doctrine, with all their denials and conclusions ; but I am not disposed to criticise too severely an honest sentiment in the direction of liberty, especially when uttered in the ardor of a political strife of unusual excitement, because of some extravagance, or of some illogical deductions : the general tendency of the resolutions on this point, is honest and right, and is consistent with a power which has been exercised by Congress, and long acquiesced in, and is in conformity with the opinions and the principles of Washington and Franklin, of Hamilton and Jefferson, of Henry and Jay — principles which were embodied in the ordinance of 1787, and which underlie the whole early policy of the Government. If these principles be Sectional, what is National ? The right to permit or prohibit Slavery in the Territories is a question of Constitutional power, on which different opinions may be, and are honestly entertained ; but the assertion of the power is no more “ sectional ” than its denial, and is far less so than the doctrine (of recent date) which a few Southern politicians have engrafted upon the Democratic creed, and have embodied in the Cincinnati platform.

To abstain from the assertion of what we believe the true doctrine on this question, under the fear of being called “ sectional,” might relieve us from that charge, only, however, to receive the merited application of a more ignominious epithet.

Col. Fremont's name has been before the public now for several

months, subject to the severe ordeal which our system of conducting popular elections brings to bear upon the candidates for high position. Much has been said in malice and in the acrimony of unrestrained political hostility, but as yet no stain has been fastened upon his character or his conduct.

A Southern man by birth and by education, he is the candidate of the party which is said to be Northern; he is supported by a party said to be opposed to the Romish religion, and his opponents say that he is a Roman Catholic; his election is opposed as dangerous to the rights of the slaveholders, and the Anti-Slavery Standard (the organ of the Abolitionists), deprecates his success, which it says, "will, in its benumbing and satisfying influence, retard the movements of the slave's redemption;" he is charged at the South with opinions and tendencies dangerous to the rights of the South, and at the North, his votes in the Senate are quoted as evidence of pro-Slavery proclivities.

I am induced to believe, from all that I can learn, that his opinions and his principles are fixed, moderate, and conservative—that while respecting, as he must do, the rights of the South, he has not been blinded to the great wrong of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the effort to extend slavery by the agency of the general Government into territory which, by a fair, clear, distinct understanding between the different parts of the Union, had been dedicated to freedom—an understanding in the nature of a compact, and the more obligatory because its permanence and its enforcement depended upon the honor and the good faith of the parties. The consequences and the consummation of this great wrong may yet be arrested only by the election of Col. Fremont, and if I correctly appreciate him and his position, that being done, the constitutional rights of the South will be as safe under his Administration as under that of any other Southern man. The guaranties and the compromises of the Constitution will be enforced, and its limitations observed—and by the removal of the cause of complaint and of apprehension which has excited and alarmed the North,—we may reasonably hope for a state of peace and quiet, and a restoration of friendly and brotherly intercourse between the different parts of the Union.

If it be said that Col. Fremont may attempt some invasion of the rights of the South—some interference with the domestic institutions of the States—or some action tending to diminish or destroy the

value, or the tenure, or the security of their property, or that he may disregard some of the obligations of the Constitution, or its compromises, its guaranties, or its limitations, to the prejudice of the South, I reply in the first place, that I have not the slightest apprehension that such an effort will be, or dare be made ; and secondly, that if it should ever be made, the North would claim the foremost position in administering the merited rebuke, in redressing the wrong, and in applying effectual securities against any recurrence of the outrage.

Besides, it is apparent, that the Executive cannot efficiently administer the Government without support from the great conservative element of the North ; which, though outraged by the abrogation of the Missouri Compromise, and the subsequent efforts of the present Administration to force slavery into Kansas, is still earnest in its determination to sustain the South in all its just rights under the Constitution of our country.

We are told that in case of the election of Colonel Fremont, the South will not, and ought not to submit — that the Union will be dissolved. This is an unpatriotic and disloyal suggestion, deserving the severest reprobation ; contemptible as a threat, and if uttered earnestly, evinces a want of proper appreciation of the priceless value, and of the strength of the Union. Doubtless there are men, both at the North and at the South, who contemplate, and some even who desire a dissolution of the Union. Our Jails and Lunatic Asylums are of sufficient capacity to accommodate them. Fortunately they are as impotent as the object they contemplate is wicked.

No, the Union of these States will not be destroyed upon a mere suspicion, or by reason of a fair and honest exercise by the People of their constitutional right to select their own rulers. If, however, the bond which holds together this Confederation of States, be so feeble as to be severed for such cause, we who have been accustomed to look to the Union as one of the greatest of political blessings, will be forced to moderate our regret at its loss by the conviction, that while enjoying its protection, we overestimated its strength and its efficiency, without which its value is a delusion.

There are two prominent issues involved in the pending contest :

I. The Slavery Question — not as an abstract question ; but a question of right and of political power, “ Shall Slavery be carried into Territory formerly covered by the Missouri Compromise ? ” and

II. The Foreign Policy of the Government — “Shall peace and justice, or violence and outrage be its policy?”

This latter issue must not be forgotten or overlooked.

As there are practically two great questions involved in the contest, so is the issue of the contest practically between two candidates — Buchanan and Fremont.

What then is our duty as Whigs?

Can we support the Democratic candidate and perpetuate the policy which has induced the very state of political sectionalism we deplore, and into which we have been plunged by the acts of the present Administration? Can we adopt the Democratic platform, and surrender the principles which have commended the Whig party to our reason, judgment, and affections? Can we accept the views which are likely to predominate in the management of our foreign relations, should the doctrines promulgated at Ostend be clothed with Executive power and authority?

For myself, I must answer these questions in the negative.

Let us turn to the other side.

We find no assault upon a single Whig principle — no danger of an unsafe and belligerent foreign policy — no extreme or violent proposition in regard to slavery where it now exists, but only that resistance to its advance and spread over soil long since made free, which we have ever advocated.

Again I answer for myself.

In such a crisis, and under such circumstances, my voice must be there. I can without difficulty perceive my way clear to that point; and though still a Whig, shall cast my vote for Fremont and Dayton, esteeming such course the best and surest remedy for present evils, and, trusting that the time is not far distant when political organizations will again assume broader and more catholic grounds,

I am, my dear sir,

with the highest respect and esteem,

Your friend and obedient servant,

HAMILTON FISH.

MR. HAMILTON'S REPLY.

To Hon. Hamilton Fish, Senator, &c., New York.

GREENBURG, Westchester Co., Oct. 4.

My Dear Sir :—Your letter of the 12th was received on the 21st ultimo.

Your remarks upon the course of the Democratic party in relation to our foreign and domestic policy, are eminently just, and I am gratified to say, they have added strength to my convictions, that the success of Mr. Buchanan would be more to be deplored than that of either of the other candidates. I cannot express in terms too strong, my contempt for the spirit of unmanly compliance, which has induced him to lay down his identity, to become the inanimate representative of a party platform. Commencing in such a spirit of submission to party dictation, no man can tell where he will end.

Conservative Whigs, who support Mr. Buchanan, insist that he did not, by his letter of acceptance, adopt "the Ostend Manifesto," or if he did, he would not be bound by it. Governor Brown, in the letter quoted by you, declares that he (Buchanan) said, "If I can be instrumental in settling the slavery question *upon the terms I have named*, and then *add Cuba to the Union*, I shall, if President, be willing to give up the ghost, and let Breckinridge take the Government." It would have been more satisfactory to the public, if not to the party, if the terms of that settlement had been fully stated. We can surmise, however, that they were ultra pro-slavery, inasmuch as they authorize Mr. Brown to say, Mr. Buchanan "is as worthy of *Southern* confidence and *Southern* votes as Mr. Calhoun *ever was*." More than this could not be said of any terms he or any other man could have named; and as to the "Ostend Manifesto," he sanctions all it imports; he makes the addition of "Cuba to the Union," let it cost what it may of blood and treasure and national honor, the crowning point of his administration; that being done, he is willing to give up the ghost and the Government to Breckinridge.

This determination to take Cuba,—to settle the slavery question on terms which put him in Southern confidence, where Mr. Calhoun was,—and then to give the Government to Breckinridge, has great, very great significance, in view of the *disloyal purposes* of many very influential leaders of the Democratic party of the South, to which I beg to call your attention, as I propose to develop them.

It is threatened by Southern Democrats and their organs, that if Fremont is elected the South will and ought to “*withdraw from the Union* ;” which means, if a majority of the American People, in an election conducted according to law, shall elect the man of their choice, the minority will not submit to the will of the majority ; but will, like the Red Republicans of France, appeal from the ballot-box to the bayonet. I repel, on behalf of the people of the South, this slander. It is impossible that the good and true men of any section of our country, will permit so base a betrayal of the first principles of Republican government — “the will of the majority must govern.”

Be assured the mere fact of such a result, or the anticipation of danger from it, will not produce such fearful consequences. The people of the South will not permit the fanatic seceders to adopt such a course ; nor would we of the North, under like circumstances, permit the mad Abolitionists to make such an attempt.

My fears of disunion result from deeper and more dangerous designs. Mr. Calhoun, and other very distinguished Southern men, have long cherished a plan formed by him, which his talents and force of character might have attempted with some probability of success ; and which his disciples are striving to accomplish :

“The establishment of a great Southern Empire”—founded on the dissolution of the Union.

That a conspiracy for such a purpose has long existed ; and that it is to be attempted, at its appointed time, after “Cuba is added to the Union,” I have long believed, and in that belief I have anxiously watched the course of events.

The first intimation of such a purpose I received from a Southern statesman, as distinguished for his personal worth as by his talents and the elevated positions he has held under successive Presidents—who, when I communicated to him the news just received in New York, that Texas was to be annexed, said with emphasis : “I am in favor of the annexation of Texas, and of the *Great Southern Em-*

pire." This will be said to have been a random expression. I did not so understand it. I considered it the declaration of a purpose, of which the annexation of Texas formed a part, and in which the declarant participated, and as such I repeated it to my friends.

It struck me with amazement; and, coming from such a source, it awakened anticipations which have been strengthened by developments, produced, as it seemed, by some unseen power, all tending to the same end.

The annexation of Texas, (by Mr. Calhoun, under the imbecile Tyler, at the *last hour* of his administration, in an unconstitutional manner); the war with and dismemberment of Mexico—(a war not made by Congress, then in session, but by Mr. Polk); the Mesilla Valley Treaty; the assaults upon Cuba by armed bands of American citizens, recruited in the South and Southwest; the permitted invasion of Nicaragua by Walker, and the recognition of the Walker-Rivas Government as soon as it was known that Slavery was to be established there (by the President, under the direction of Mr. Jefferson Davis, an avowed seceder); Mr. Soule's mission, and his attempt to bully Spain into a sale of Cuba; or to drive her into a war; the Ostend Manifesto—its Adoption by the Platform; Mr. Buchanan's nomination (who is as true to Southern interests as "*Mr. Calhoun ever was*") and his declaration on accepting, that he was willing when he should *add Cuba to the Union*, to give up the ghost and the Government to Breckinridge; Mr. Soule's existing mission to Walker and the States of Central America; the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, in order, by the agitation of slavery, "to weld the whole South into a solid mass," and to form a cordon of Slave States from Missouri to the Pacific Ocean;—these are all events which, in their results, are important to a combination under one rule of Cuba, Central America, Mexico, and that portion of the United States which is south of the north line of Kansas.

To the success of this gigantic project, not revealed in its full proportions to all of the most zealous seceders, it is necessary that the whole power of the United States should be exerted for the purchase or conquest of Cuba. That being accomplished by the blind instrument of the Platform, it will be important that a Southern man of talents and courage, as Mr. Breckinridge confessedly is, should hold the reins of this Government, in order to make such an arrangement with the Great Southern Empire as will ensure peaceful and satisfactory terms of separation.

This may be denounced as the vision of an alarmist. I take that risk, in avowing as I do my solemn conviction that such a purpose is, and has long been entertained by men holding high stations in the States South, in the United States, and in the Democratic party.

Mr. Keitt, a Member of Congress from South Carolina, in a speech made recently in Virginia, speaking of the people of the South, said: "They love progress, and the first step in that direction is the acquisition of Cuba. [Loud and enthusiastic cheers.] Standing on your Southern shores, the sentinel on our watch towers, it must be ours, or the South is exposed to invasion. Yes, it must be ours, and I have no objection to the filibusters taking it. [Loud cheers.] Take it, and we will pay for it afterwards. [Tremendous cheers.] Take it — I care not in what manner — and then we will roll into it a Gulf Stream of Southern population that will make it truly the gem of the Antilles. Extensively guarded, by nature protected, roll into it your Southern population, and the navies of all the earth may thunder around its shores, and they will thunder in vain. [Loud cheers.] Yes, controlling the commerce of the West for three thousand miles, and controlling also the commerce of the East, through the greater enterprise and commercial spirit of our population, Cuba would be what Palmyra was in ancient times, if it once throws off the despotism of Spanish rule. [Loud cheers.] The Democratic party can and will take it. [Cheers.] The destiny of that party is indeed a noble destiny. [Loud cheers.] Convulsed as the world is—shaking off its old domination, breaking its old fetters—what a spectacle rises up before us! Affairs in Nicaragua are strongly tending to a favorable issue. [Cheers.] Already has it entered upon its career of greatness, and the certainty of its progress is no longer a matter of doubt."

The reference to the power of *Cuba* from its position, "standing on our Southern shores—the sentinel on our watch-towers"—"filled with a Southern population"—"controlling the commerce of the West for three thousand miles," (that is, the commerce of the Western rivers which flow into the Gulf;) and "controlling also the commerce of the East," that is, the commerce of the Atlantic parts of the United States of the North,—is most significant and perfectly intelligible, when connected with the plan of "*The Great Southern Empire*."

To those who believe that nullification and secession were intended

and attempted by South Carolina, that the Nashville Convention disclosed a purpose of dissolution entertained by very many influential men, and that there is an opinion at the South that the Union cannot and ought not to continue, which is earnestly fostered by a large class of Southern politicians, the events which have been and which are expected to be brought about by the power of the United States, directed and controlled by those men, tending to extend our Southern boundary to which I have referred, are not only obviously necessary, but must be admitted to be politic, in view of the purpose to secede and to form a Southern Empire. To those who so believe, these suggestions will not be deemed extraordinary.

Under such circumstances it is quite certain, that should Mr. Buchanan be elected, the whole power of the United States is to be exerted to secure *Cuba* by purchase or conquest; and that being done, that the plan will be sufficiently matured to attempt dismemberment, and the consolidation of the Great Empire.

The States of Central America (one has already intimated a wish to be annexed,) would readily seek repose, and the development of their vast material resources, under the Ægis of the Great Empire of which they would form integral parts, and for which Mr. Soulé may now be preparing them. Mexico, torn by internal dissensions—insolvent—pressed by Great Britain—and by all parts of the Great Empire on the North, and by another part—the States of Central America on the South, with the watch-tower of the Empire on her Gulf border, to avoid submission to the terms of a conqueror, would probably seek, with unbecoming haste, the glory of being a member of “The Great Southern Empire.”

The Union will not be dissolved, or attempted to be, by the election of Mr. Fremont, or at all, until the range of our Southern boundary shall be extended, so as to embrace all the States and Territories required to form an imposing confederacy.

Although the disciples of Mr. Calhoun may have accomplished much, and designed to do much more, to establish such a government, there is much yet to be done. The election of Mr. Buchanan, the blind but most important instrument of their success, is to be achieved, in despite of an immense majority of the people of the United States. The leading Whigs of the South and Southwest, with vast numbers of the people of both these sections, who remain true to the Union, are to be brought into the faith, whenever that

attempt shall be made, as it surely will be, if Mr. Buchanan is elected, and has *added Cuba to the Union*. The loyalty and patriotism of the people, being animated by the glorious spirit of their Republican ancestors, they will strike for the integrity and honor of our common country.

Deeply and painfully impressed with the conviction that the unhallowed purposes to which I have referred, are seriously entertained by a large body of influential men, both in and out of the government, who now are, and have long been, adroitly shaping the affairs of our country to carry out their treasonable purposes; and convinced, as I am, that if Mr. Buchanan is elected we shall be burdened with an enormous debt, incurred for the purchase or conquest of Cuba — *not* for the benefit of the *whole* United States, but to prepare for disunion and the Great Southern Empire, I am convinced it is the duty of all, regardless of all consequences, to defeat Mr. Buchanan. I will, therefore, as soon as I am convinced that Mr. Fillmore's election is hopeless, knowing my duty, most cheerfully and zealously perform it.

You believe Mr. Fillmore cannot get an electoral vote, although I believe he will get the votes of two Southern States, and, in a certain contingency, may get the votes of two Northern States. I am convinced he cannot be elected. It is barely possible that the election may go to the House of Representatives — an event deeply to be deplored at all times, but particularly when the parties there are so deeply excited against each other, as they are too well known to be. Should this take place, it is believed that a choice cannot be made, unless the partisans of Mr. Fillmore will cast their votes for Mr. Buchanan. If that should not be so, the Democrats will hopelessly but perseveringly vote for Mr. Buchanan until the end of the session, in order that the Vice-President, Mr. Breckinridge, elected by the Senate, may be President. The government being in the hands of the latter, the same policy to which Mr. Buchanan is pledged, will be boldly and unhesitatingly carried out. Under the conviction that in no case can Mr. Fillmore be elected, I have decided, after the most earnest review of my first impressions and the whole subject, that it is my imperative duty, regardless of all present consequences, to exert whatever influence I may possess to promote the election of Mr. Fremont.

The highest duty of an American citizen is loyalty to the Union

and devotion to the Constitution. The former was prompted by the common interests and common sympathies of the people, long anterior to the declaration of their independence ; the latter, the result of a compromise of feelings, opinions, and interests, to preserve and perpetuate the former ; both are of inappreciable value. The imagination of man cannot embrace the evils to all sections of our country which would follow disunion. The first step would plunge us into civil war ; and every other step would bring along a dark and dreary waste of crime and misery.

The resentments now indulged in being the bitter fruit of mutual crimination and wrong, would, in that event, ripen into the deadliest hate. It has been truly said, "of all the evils to public liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it creates and develops the seeds of every other : war is the parent of armies ; from these proceed debts and taxes ; and armies, debts, and taxes, are the sure means for bringing the many under the dominion of the few. No nation has long preserved its freedom in the midst of perpetual wars." These are solemn admonitions applicable to both parties — North and South — in the event of disunion. There is another from the same source to which the South ought to listen, at least with respect. Speaking of collisions between the States, Mr. Madison says : — "I take no notice of an unhappy species of population abounding in some of the States, who during the calm of regular government, are sunk below the level of men ; but who, in the tempestuous scenes of civil violence, may emerge into the human character, and give a superiority of strength to any party with which they may associate themselves." It is not difficult to decide with which party, in a civil war, this class would be associated.

We turn from this truly painful subject, to that other, which is the cause of all our troubles, present and anticipated.

Leading men, North and South, prompted by ambition and avarice, wickedly combined to violate a compact which has received the sanction of, and been held sacred by, the whole nation for over thirty years, in order to extend the area of Slavery. This monstrous wrong has wounded the Northern heart, and excited a spirit of resistance and resentment, which will not be satisfied until that wrong is righted.

However much you and I, with all other men, who love their *whole* country, may regret such a sectional issue, there it is. It is

upon us by no act of the North, and it must be met and settled, now and forever. To regret it, to shut our eyes to this fact, or to endeavor to cover it over by unmeaning generalities, will do no good.

The restoration of that compromise line would be the shortest and the best remedy. This, we are told, cannot be done. If that be so, the only other remedy, is to give practical effect to that compact by all lawful and constitutional means.

Having been called to reply to your letter, and to the letters of other gentlemen, who have honored me by associating my name with their communications to the public, and thus to give a prominence to my opinions which I know they do not deserve, I can only express my most anxious wish that our countrymen on the one side and the other may pause in their mad career, and taking counsel from their mutual interests, may, when this contest is ended, whatever may be its issue, moved by recollections of the past, their knowledge of the present, and their anticipations of the future glory of their country under the Union and the Constitution, sacrifice upon the altar of patriotism all unhallowed feelings, and honestly endeavor, in a spirit of justice and magnanimity, to restore that harmony, mutual good-will and confidence which inspired our fathers, and which carried them safely through all their difficulties in war and in peace.

I remain, my dear sir, with respect and regard, your friend and obedient servant.

JAMES A. HAMILTON.